

Augusta Pulse

Winter/Spring 2008

For employees and friends of the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center

www.va.gov/augusta



This Issue:

**Clinical Pastoral
Education**

**Rededication
Ceremony**

**New Aiken
Outpatient Clinic**





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On the cover: Chaplain Charles Rector meets with SCIU patient.

Director's Message

The new year has already proven to be as exciting as 2007 here at the newly named Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center. It is an honor to be named after a Congressman who was a U.S. Army veteran and worked diligently to protect and improve veteran's health care.



Our name change was not the only significant event taking place. On December 18, 2007, we celebrated the opening of our new off-campus Seamless Transition Center designed to meet the needs of the men and women who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. In addition, we have finally seen the dream to open a new Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Aiken, South Carolina become a reality. This clinic will allow us to improve our access and services provided to the veterans in this community and surrounding areas. These clinics will be an extension of the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center and as such, embrace our three promises to veterans. Those promises are:

- We will provide care second to none, the best care anywhere.*
- We will maintain and expand veterans' health care services.*
- Every veteran will be personally satisfied with the care they receive from us, based on the outcome.*

I am proud to say that our staff strives daily to ensure these promises are met. We are looking forward to another year successfully serving our nation's most deserving citizens.

Rebecca J. Wiley
Director, Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center



Downtown Division



Uptown Division



AUGUSTA VA NAMED FOR LOCAL CONGRESSMAN AND HEALTH CARE ADVOCATE

On November 8, 2007, the President of the United States signed Public Law 110-112, designating the Augusta VA Medical Center as the “Charlie Norwood Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center.” Charles Whitlow Norwood, Jr. was one of Georgia’s most beloved members of Congress, long time veterans’ and patients’ rights champion, and decorated Vietnam veteran. He was a six-term member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1995 to 2005. Congressman Norwood achieved national recognition in health care reform after introducing the first comprehensive managed health care legislation to Congress in 1995. The former army dentist was co-author of the Keep Our Promises to Military Retirees Act in 1999, which provided

fully funded health care for life for our nation’s military retirees. This legislation became law as part of the Defense Authorization Act of 2000.

After graduation from Georgetown University Dental School, Dr. Norwood volunteered for and served as a Captain in the U.S. Army Dental Corps from 1967 to 1969. He was one of the first participants in the Army outreach program that delivered dentists to forward firebases in lieu of transferring patients to rear treatment areas, and assisted in non-dental trauma care in Mobile Army Surgical Hospitals (MASH). In recognition of his service under combat conditions, he was awarded the Combat Medical Badge and two Bronze Stars.

On January 15, 2008, a Rededication Ceremony was held to recognize the name change to the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center. The guest of honor, Mrs. Gloria Norwood, was accompanied by her two sons, Charles and Carlton, and grandchildren Kristen and Carlton, Jr. Other distinguished guests included six Georgia congressmen, Senator Saxby Chambliss, the Mayor of Augusta/Richmond County, and service organizations and friends of the family. The American Legion Department of Georgia graciously sponsored a reception following the ceremony.

VA Introduces Clinical Pastoral Education to Local Community



Finally the Augusta community has a program that many have wanted for years. The Augusta VA Medical Center introduced the Clinical Pastoral Educational (CPE) Residency Program this past fall, with the first class beginning January 2, 2008. "This was a dream come true," says VA's Chief of Chaplain Services, Chaplain Ron Craddock. "Shortly after my arrival on the job in October 2006, I discovered that there was a serious interest in CPE training by local clergy and area medical centers." The "acting" Director of Chaplaincy from the National VA Chaplains

Center, Keith Ethridge, was invited to Augusta in April 2007 to discuss and assist in developing the plan for establishing a CPE Residency Program. Chaplain Ethridge met with interested VA staff and members of the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA) to assist in developing the initial "footprint" for the CSRA CPE Residency Program. Rebecca Wiley, Medical Center Director for the

Augusta VAMC, approved the site visit report from Chaplain Ethridge soon after his visit to Augusta. "It helped having a new director like Ms. Wiley that came from a VA Medical Center with a strong CPE Residency Program like Jackson, Mississippi." After several months of intense work, the Professional Advisory Group and the "footprint" for the new CSRA CPE Residency Program were established.

Clinical Pastoral Education is the clinical education required, in addition to the academic degrees (BA/BS and Master of Divinity Degrees), to qualify for VHA Clinical Staff Chaplain positions. It is also the education required by "most" larger local public and private medical centers like Medical College of Georgia (MCG) and University Medical Center in Augusta. Additionally, it is the clinical training

"It helped having a new director like Ms. Wiley that came from a VA Medical Center with a strong CPE Residency Program"



required by all professional chaplain cognate groups to become Board Certified as a clinical chaplain. In essence, it is the same type of year-long clinical training required by Psychology and Social Work for their clinical professionals to be qualified to work as professional healthcare providers. This program will be accredited through the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc (ACPE).

The CSRA community will benefit greatly from this new program, which is designed to enhance the pastoral clinical and counseling skills of many local ministers, chaplains and seminarians. "We receive calls on a daily basis from local clergy who are interested in receiving CPE training," says Chaplain Craddock. "This community is 'ripe' for a CPE Residency Program!"

The Medical College of Georgia and University

Hospital will join together in support of the program, with the Charlie Norwood VA Augusta being the primary owner of the program. Each medical center anticipates sponsoring at least one stipend student per year, and possibly more depending on funding. Three to eight full time residents will be shared between the three medical centers each quarter.

An "extended" program may also be possible throughout the year. The "extended" program will permit local community clergy to complete a unit of CPE as part time residents. CPE residents will have an opportunity to

receive training in various clinical settings at each of the three cooperating medical centers. They will be required to complete a specific number of hours of classroom didactics with subject matter experts from each of the medical centers. Some didactic training will be provided through video telecasting, allowing the students to get excellent instruction from renowned professionals at minimum costs.

On October 1, 2007, Chaplain Janice Hanson arrived on the staff of the Chaplain Services Department as the new CPE Supervisor at the Charlie Norwood VA. Her primary responsibility will be to establish the CSRA CPE Residency Program "from ground up." Chaplain Hanson is a retired U.S. Army Chaplain who served

"This community is 'ripe' for a CPE Residency Program!"



CPE Residency Cont.

as CPE Supervisor at Ft Gordon and at the Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. She comes to Augusta with a great deal of experience.

For several years Augusta VA has worked closely with Eisenhower Medical Center CPE program, at Ft. Gordon, allowing their active duty residents to train at both VA divisions. Their residents have focused on clinical training in various units, including Spinal Cord, ICU/CCU/MICU and the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Domiciliary program. They also receive clinical pastoral training on the Active Duty Rehabilitation Unit working with Soldiers, Sailors and Marines, many of which have combat injuries from Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom. This is a unique opportunity for CPE residents because Augusta VAMC is the first to establish such a unit in the entire United States.

Augusta VAMC has two full time clinical chaplains, a CPE Supervisory chaplain and a department chief along with a contracted part time Roman Catholic chaplain. The Augusta VAMC Chaplain Services Department provides Clinical Pastoral Care to 480 active beds and over 30,000 outpatients a year. For more information about the CPE program, contact Chaplain Janice Hanson at (706) 733-0188, extension 6113.

Stroke Education

This Class Can Change Your Life

"Take one morning and change your life." That is exactly what several veterans, their spouses and some VA employees recently did. The Neurology Department sponsored a one hour stroke prevention class for veterans, their families, and VA staff, with an emphasis on control of risk factors. Even though everyone knows the importance of proper diet and exercise, many attendees had more questions.... "How can we eat better, when he only likes biscuits and gravy?" and "I don't like to exercise-so what should i do?"

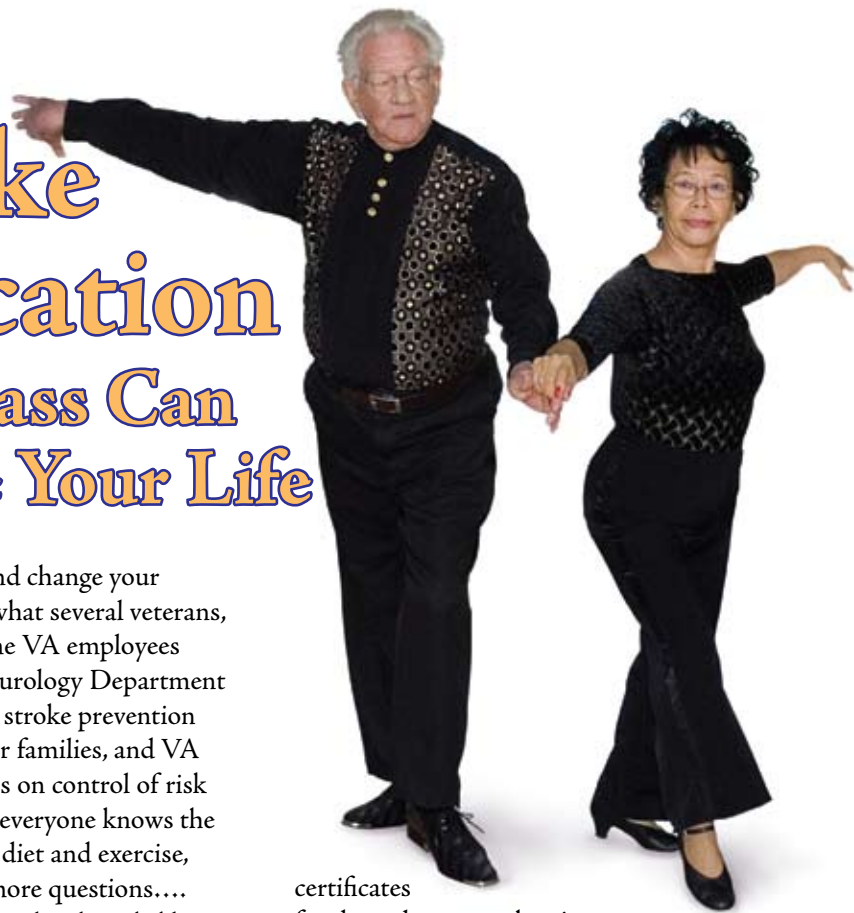
Enter an attractive couple to participate in the class. This dashing WWII veteran and his lovely wife shared a similar tale. Several years ago, they looked at themselves, decided they were overweight, and needed to do something. The two of them took up ballroom dancing and their lives have never been the same. The pair shared their moves with the group, performing a waltz and tango before the delighted audience. The moral of their story: *exercise can be fun and burning calories promotes weight reduction.* The dance studio even donated gift

certificates for dance lessons to be given as door prizes.

Charlene Jackson, Employee Wellness Coordinator, reiterated the couple's enthusiasm, and spoke to the group about formulating a plan for exercise. She recommended incorporating exercise gradually into one's daily life, and choosing forms of exercise that could be maintained over time. Ms. Jackson also discussed the other benefits of exercise, including stress reduction and improved sleep.

Karen Cota, VA Dietician, addressed the biscuit question, and gave appetizing examples of enjoyable foods. She reviewed the secrets of reading labels, following a low-salt diet without suffering, and watching portions. She even passed around samples of her delicious homemade no salt salsa.

The stroke education class meets quarterly. All veterans, their families and VA staff are welcome. For more information, call the Neurology Department at (706) 733-0188 extension 2419.





Aiken Community Based Outpatient Clinic Becomes a Reality



The dream of a VA clinic in Aiken, South Carolina and surrounding communities has finally become a reality. The Aiken Community Based Outpatient Clinic opened its doors to veterans on February 4, following a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on February 1, 2008. The clinic, located at 951 Millbrook Avenue in Aiken, will serve veterans from Aiken, Barnwell and Edgefield counties. It is anticipated that 5,000 veterans will receive their care at the Aiken Clinic during its first year in operation. The support from veterans in the community has been overwhelmingly

positive. This clinic will allow the Charlie Norwood VA the opportunity to improve access to care for veterans residing in this area.

Mary F. Snelling, RN, MS, is the Clinic Manager. Initially, 17 full-time VA personnel will staff the Clinic providing primary care and mental health services. Clinic hours will be 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.



AROUND THE GROUNDS



Customer Service Lunch

The Patient Customer Service Committee comprised of patients being treated in our facility and the executive team meets quarterly to exchange ideas and discuss ways to continually improve services. This group is currently working on a welcome booklet for new admissions.



Gold Medal Athletes

Left to right: David Pattillo, Assistant Director; Scott Winkler and Orlando Perez, Gold Medal Athletes; Rebecca Wiley, Medical Center Director; and John Goldman, Associate Medical Center Director. Scott and Orlando were at the Charlie Norwood VA signing sports cards for patients, staff and visitors. Both wheelchair athletes will be featured on a special edition Cheerios box to be sold in military markets and VCS retail stores around the country.



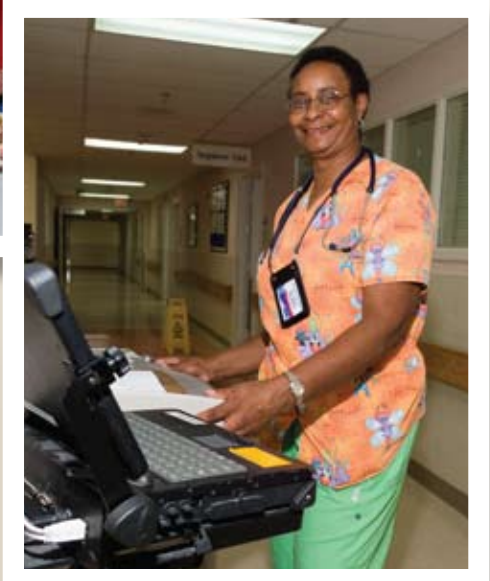
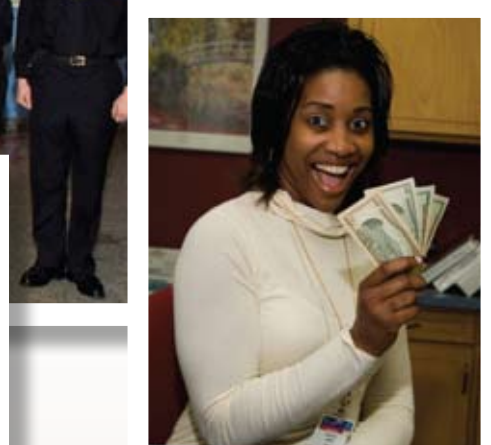
2007 CFC

Julie Kennedy, United Way/ Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) Manager, receives a check from Associate Medical Center Director, John Goldman. Employees raised \$124,276.00 during the 2007 CFC.



Lunch with the Director

Left to right: Todd Rheins, Rene' Kirschner, Vicki Hornsby, Rebecca Wiley, Zelma Striggles, Bernice Johnson, Cindy Young, Sylvester Taylor, Carlos Wiggins, and Cindy White attended the November Lunch With the Director. This luncheon is held quarterly to recognize staff that have exemplified outstanding customer service.



New Assistant Director Appointed

David Pattillo was appointed Assistant Medical Center Director for the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center. Prior to this assignment, Pattillo served as the Deputy Director for Administration at the VA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (NCP) from 2004 through 2007. Previously, he served at the Maryland Health Care System where, as Executive Officer, he was responsible for completing the highly successful mission change of the Fort Howard VA Medical Center. Prior to joining VA, Pattillo served in executive health care management positions in the private sector with both Columbia Health Care of America and the Cape Fear Valley Health Care System.

Pattillo served as a Medical Service Corps officer in the United States Army and has over 20 years of active duty service. During his career, he served with the 82nd Airborne Division, 44th, Medical Brigade (Airborne), Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Womack Army Medical Center, and both the 18th and 43rd Mobile Army Surgical Hospitals (MASH).

He has a BS in Biology from The Citadel and a Masters of Healthcare Administration (MHA) from Baylor University. He also has a Masters in Military Arts and Science (MMAS) from the United States Army Command and General Staff College.



Reggie Shannon, LPN, is an inspiration to his co-workers in Primary Care. He is always enthusiastic about patient care and remains upbeat, going above the call of duty to assist in caring for all patients. Reggie maintains a positive attitude and his sense of humor is a benefit to everyone around him,

even under adverse circumstances. Most importantly, he has not allowed his disability to hinder him in the performance of his duties. Reggie has a no-nonsense approach to problem solving and contributes a high level of energy, self determination and encouragement to patients and

co-workers. His friendliness and courtesy has been acknowledged by patients and their families.

Reggie is a scout master for a local Boy Scout Troup and Commissioner at Large for the Boys Scouts of American, CSRA district. He enjoys reading, camping, fishing and collecting Nascar Memorabilia.

From injuries received 18 years ago, Reggie became a paraplegic and performs his duties from a wheelchair. He did not let his disability hinder his goal of obtaining a degree and becoming a Licensed Practical Nurse. Reggie worked on the Spinal Cord Injury Unit at the Augusta VA demonstrating to others that having a disability should not be a deterrent from being a productive member of society. Reggie's disability has been a positive example to others by demonstrating they can have a productive life if they adopt the motto: "You can accomplish your goals with a positive attitude."



Left to right: David Marana, Pat Curley, Mary Gardenhire, Catharina Thompson & Catherine McAdams

MRSA PREVENTION INITIATIVE

October 2007 marked the start of the full implementation of the national VHA MRSA Prevention Initiative at the Augusta VA in the six acute care units. The Critical Care Unit (CCU), under the leadership of Rose Wright RN MSN, Nurse Manager, had piloted the prevention initiative in the CCU earlier in the year. Using the four components of the MRSA Prevention Initiative the staff of the CCU achieved the goal of “ZERO” MRSA transmissions as of November 2007.

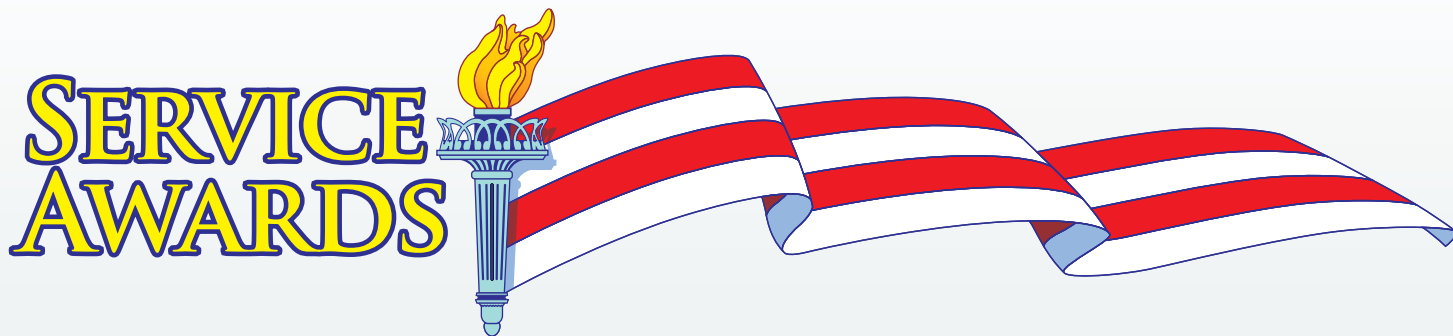
A “Zeroing in on MRSA Prevention Initiative Kick-Off” was held in October and designed around the four components of the MRSA Prevention Initiative called the Bundle. The Bundle is composed of: 1) active surveillance, 2) contact precautions, 3) hand hygiene, and 4) culture change. During the kick-off each part of the Bundle was introduced by a member of the executive leadership or their representative. Educational activities,

examples of new contact isolation bins and bottles of Isagel for personal hand hygiene were distributed. Staff were also instructed in nasal and wound swabbing. Almost 300 staff took part and received 30 minutes of educational credit for viewing short DVDs on MRSA or parts of the Bundle. Along with the education component was a bit of fun and entertainment with the first MRSA IDOL contest. Six participants competed for prizes and the prestige of winning. The top finishers were occupational and physical therapists from the Spinal Cord Injury Unit. As part of their creative routine, they dressed in PPE as the “MRSA VILLAGE PEOPLE,” and did the “YMCA” song with lyrics transposed to “MRSA” with an appropriate educational message. They even had choreography to accompany their song.

Learning how to get to “ZERO” transmissions of MRSA can lead to a drop in the other germs that

hurt our veterans. The VHA MRSA Prevention Initiative has the means to get to “ZERO,” and stay there. It will take the commitment of every employee throughout the facility, VISN and the whole VHA to make it a reality. Make the commitment today to fight this germ right where you are; in the lab, x-ray, a clinic, an office or at the bedside. To find out more about how you can help call the MRSA Prevention Coordinator, Catherine McAdams at extension 2304. Ms. McAdams will be glad to give you the answers you need to join in the fight against MRSA.





EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH:

Roxanne Russell
Specialty Care
(August 2007)

Betty Jiles
Facility Management
(September 2007)

Benjamin Hamilton
Pharmacy
(October 2007)

Tom Harris
Rehabilitation Service
(November 2007)

David Hattaway
Pharmacy
(December 2007)

Teresa Andrews
Radiology
(January 2008)

Duane Love
Nursing
(February 2008)

STAR TRECC CUSTOMER SERVICE RECOGNITION:

Carmen Cromer
Chief of Staff/Nursing
(August 2007)

Thomas Tripp
Facility Management
(September 2007)

Bennie Stephens
Director's Office
(October 2007)

Greg Williams
Rehabilitation Service
(November 2007)

Brian Rothwell
Medical Media
(December 2007)

Garnett Thomas
Facilities Management
(EMS)
(January 2008)

Margaret Chesser
MCCR
(February 2008)

The following employees have reached a special milestone in their years of government service during the months of August 2007 through February 2008.

40 Year Service Award:

Helen L. Bussey
Max. W. Erdelt
Sheila H. Mulkey
Jacqueline B. Walton
Harold L. Williams

35 Year Service Award:

William C. Bailey
Bernard J. Burgess
Mae D. Denny
Leroy Finklin Jr.
Frank L. Garrett
Arthur H. Jones
Lillian S. Lepping
Charles E. Ready

Cynthia K. Rogers
Jerry B. White Jr.

30 Year Service Award:

Karen R. Auvenshine
Beverly Brighthop
Robert T. Brown
Mary J. Burden
Lurlene U. Burts
Donald L. Butler
Christopher A. Covar
Kenneth R. Dillard
Richard J. Eargle
Virginia C. Hamilton
Gloria J. Harris
Lorraine W. Jackson
Betty J. Jiles
Daniel H. Kiernan
John T. Kolmar
Shirley C. McCloud
Earl A. Murray
Jacqueline Perry
Christine Quattlebaum

Donald W. Reed
Alan M. Smith
Francine N. Sparks
William A. Sterling
Thomas J. Stewart
Joseph Strowder
Carrie L. Thornton
Dock S. Way
Robert J. Webster Jr.
Jennifer L. Wedincamp
Harry J. White
Cynthia D. Williams
Lawrence F. Witt III
Charles T. Wright

25 Year Service Award:

Julie L. Barden
Mark R. Barron
Linda S. Brantley
Loranie M. Carson
Pamela W. Caruthers
Linda M. Congers
Raymond S. Corpe

Alexzine R. Cox
Wanda F. Crawford
Paul M. Dainer
Monroe J. Dawson
Sherald L. Douglas
Mark Alan Fox
Ernest Freeman
Magnolia B. Garnett
Sue S. Hitchcock
Jacquelyn G. Jackson
Andrea C. Johnson
Murlane D. Jones
Lucille B. Lane
Jewell D. Lee
Theresa A. Lender
Beverly J. Parker
Mary C. Perano
Angela J. Powell
Marylyn A. Reeves
George D. Sanders
Daniza T. Saxon
Willie C. Shirley
Cynthia G. Surles

Annette J. Thrower
Warren L. Whitlock
Gary J. Winter

20 Year Service Award:

Jonathan Glenn Benson
Angela M. Betts
Toby A. Bisso
Charles F. Boyer
Valarie M. Brooks
Georgia C. Bryant
Lawanda Calhoun
David E. Colon-Lopez
Stephanie Davis
Michael P. Delaney
Sherry A. Elias
Eneida English
Natalie G. Farmer
Daphne R. Freeman
Irene E. George
Susan S. Hancock
Lisa A. Henderson
Annie B. Hester
Bonnie J. Holley
Timothy Horn
Proteon C. Hughes
Jerri M. Hunter
Willie Mae Jackson
Kinga Kovacs Ferrara
Edward K. Leahy
Leaella Lemons
Jerry J. Lewis
Georgene Luke
Paula J. Martin
Nanci P. McPhail
Linda M. Parrish
Richard E. Phillips
Janet M. Ramos
Raymond J. Scarlett
Joseph S. Soparas

James D. Tate
Eugene M. Telfair
Jacqueline Thompkins
Michelle L. Turman
Maria D. Vega
Lillie M. Williams
Michael E. Willis
Minnie L. Zimmermon

15 Year Service Award:

Darryl J. Barnes
Wyche C. Bartles
Carmen L. Beard
Audrey E. Brannon
Malliga E. Ganapathy
Doris E. Keith
Colleen E. McVerry
Lisa N. Meister
Joan D. Mims
Nancy N. Parker
Christopher P. Pesenti
Thomas B. Platt
Beverly A. Rowell
Lourdes Sanchez
Muriel G. Short
Owen B. Smith
Robert John Thompson

10 Year Service Award:

Bernadette H. Baker
Erik R. Baker
Vonetta A. Brooks
Timothy Z. Burkett
Bennie J. Caesar
Gwendolyn A. Carswell
William R. Cleveland
Susan L. Hannah
Michele P. Johnson
Joseph J. Korwin
Jeffrey R. Lee

Tilda D. Lyde
Frankye M. Mace
Susan M. Meyer
Jennifer G. Mitchell
Michele A. Mitchell
Walter J. Moore
Jerodine N. Mukweyi
Richard C. Parish
Ronnell E. Parks
Alvin R. Peeples
Benjamin Ramos Jr.
Tammy Rewis
Elmira E. Roulhac
Beverly G. Stinson
Geraldine Studemire
Duane E. Taylor
Teia D. Vaughn
Lisa A. Walker
Herbert L. Widener Jr.
Khari D. Williams
Sherry N. Williams
Rosalind Williamson

Congratulations to the following outstanding staff for significant contributions, acknowledgements and recognitions:

Two staff from Charlie Norwood VA were selected to participate in the VALUE 2008 Class:
Erin Jolly, Women and Minority Veterans Coordinator and **Vicki Hornsby**, Community Relations Office, were selected to participate in the 2008 VISN 7 VALUE class.

Himanshu Singh, VISN 7 Clinical Informatics Manager and **Vijay Kumar**, Associate Chief of Staff for Research, were chosen to represent the Charlie Norwood VA as the ECF participants.

Chaplain Ron Craddock, Chief Chaplain Department, spoke at the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces and the Endorsers Conference for VA Chaplaincy.

Congratulations to **Tracy Northrup**, Podiatry Technician, who was selected by the Augusta Chronicle as the Healthcare Person of the Week. Ms. Northrup was nominated by a patient for her professionalism, compassion, and deep caring in the performance of her job.

Employees of the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center contributed \$121,497 for the Combined Federal Campaign. The original goal of \$110,000 was surpassed by \$11,497.



2008 All Employee Survey

April 21st - May 12th

*Anonymous voice your concerns and be heard!
Your opinion makes a difference!
We want to hear from you!*

Champions Challenge



The Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center was host to the Champions' Challenge Kick Off on November 28th. Opening the program was Dr. Raymond Kostromin, Facility MOVE! and Weight Management

Physician. Rebecca Wiley, Medical Center Director, joined Orlando Perez in cutting the ribbon to kick off the ceremony. Mr. Perez was our honored guest and a 2007 Wheelchair Olympics winner of gold in the 100 meter, 200

meter, 400 meter, and 800 meter events and winner of silver in basketball. He led the group of participants in the roll-walk, which was dedicated to and in honor of all military personnel who have served and are serving. The Honor chair, that gave recognition to our military branches, was navigated by PDD Leonard A. Palguta, Commandant, Marine Corps League, Riverfront Detachment 1132.

The Champions' Challenge is a joint effort presented by the Veterans Canteen Service and Healthier US Veterans who challenged veterans and employees to walk or roll 100 miles in 100 days. The program focuses attention on becoming more physically active and on health and wellness.

Grant Received From Very Special Arts



The VA/Very Special Artist in Residence Program is a national program that fosters healing in veterans by using artistic outlets to enhance quality of life and facilitate the rehabilitation process. This program is sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs and offered thru Recreation Therapy. In September 2007 VAMC Augusta received a grant to conduct an Artist-In-Residence Program. This consists of a series of classes in Drawing and Pottery taught by local and nationally known artist and veteran Norman Hughes. The drawing classes teach patients shading and composition techniques, perspective and portrait

drawing. In the Pottery series patients are introduced to hand building techniques, bisque firing and ceramic glazing.

Classes are conducted in the Uptown Division Arts Clinic and are open to all inpatients and outpatients suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Depression, Physical Injuries and the Visually Impaired. A patient from the drawing class wrote in his evaluation: "The drawing class was positive and an eye opener. When I was troubled and felt lost the class gave me my space in time. Very helpful and needed as a healing tool." Helen Medlock, Help Hospitalized Veterans, Craft Care Specialist, and administrator of the program hopes that more of these programs will be offered in the future to help our patients heal through the arts.

Pulse Points

CARF Accreditation

Recently, three of our programs were reaccredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). These three programs are: Blind Rehabilitation Program, Active Duty Rehabilitation / Brain Injury Inpatient Rehabilitation Program, and Medical Rehabilitation Program. CARF grants a full three-year accreditation to those programs proving substantial compliance with their standards. The Charlie Norwood VA

Medical Center currently has five programs which hold full accreditation. In addition to these three, there is the Spinal Cord Injury Program and the Vocational Rehabilitation / HCHV (Homeless) Program.

Congratulations to all of the staff supporting these programs for achieving this recognition of excellence!

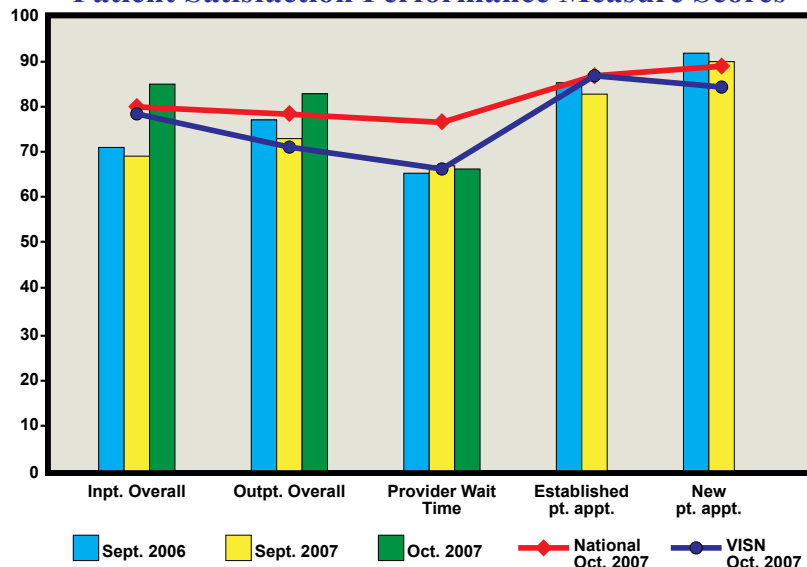
Patient Satisfaction

Patient satisfaction scores have been the focus of all medical center staff. We are proud of our improvements demonstrated below in the latest Customer Service Performance Measure scores for October 2007.

Inpatient overall satisfaction went up 15 points, outpatient overall satisfaction increased 11 points. Provider wait times are still a

challenge that we are addressing; while the question, "did you get your appointment as soon as you wanted?" for established and new patients did not have enough responses to score. It is important that all patients receiving the random Survey of Health Care Experiences of Patients (SHEP) complete the survey.

Patient Satisfaction Performance Measure Scores



QUALITY COUNTS

Our promise to our patients is that every patient will receive care second to none! We measure this objectively through our current Performance Measurement System. Here are some results from the first quarter (October 2007 – December 2007) "Report Card":

For patients being treated for an acute myocardial infarction (heart attack)

- 100% received aspirin within 24 hours of admission AND had aspirin prescribed at discharge!
- 100% received beta blockers within 24 hours of admission AND had beta blockers prescribed at discharge!
- 100% had an LDL cholesterol assessment AND were prescribed lipid lowering therapy if they needed it!
- 100% had an EKG within 10 minutes and a troponin test returned within 60 minutes!

For patients treated for pneumonia

- 100% had an oxygenation assessment completed!
- 100% had blood cultures performed in the Emergency Room prior to any antibiotics!
- 100% were given a pneumococcal vaccination prior to discharge from the medical center!



Dear Director,

I am extremely grateful for the excellent treatment I recently received for my broken hip. From admission to discharge my medical care could not have been better. While I recognize there are 155 VA facilities and hundreds of clinics, I'm convinced of my good fortune to live in Augusta.

Every department from ER, OR, medicine, PT, OT and nursing took the best care possible of me. I took every opportunity to thank all my care givers from my orthopedic surgeons to each health technician. Everyone everyone did an excellent job. I authorize anyone to pass my thankful comments along.

Thanks,

JK

Dear Ms. Wiley,

Recently I was hospitalized at the Augusta VA in downtown with an extremely severe case of pneumococcal bacterial meningitis. The first three days of my hospitalization are lost to me; my family and friends have told me that the hospital staff took immediate and pro-active care of me.

The doctors who diagnosed and treated me were beyond attentive and conscientious in caring for me. They visited me daily and they were accompanied by several interns and medical students. They conversed with me on a regular basis and showed genuine concern for my condition. The nursing staff on unit 5D likewise always exhibited professionalism in their many duties, whether it was collecting blood samples or changing bed linens. They are all truly wonderful examples of the nursing profession.

In the end I wish to say that I believe I received better care at the Augusta VA downtown hospital than I could have had at any of the other public or private hospitals in the CSRA. I hope the doctors and nurses receive the excellent credit they deserve.

Sincerely Yours,

RB

To the Augusta Director,

I always go to the Spinal Cord Injury Unit on the 6th floor. I always receive excellent care. If the VA really wants to see how to treat patients, go see these people! They treat you like family, they speak and listen to you. Dr. Mary Thomas is my doctor and when I have any concern I'll call her or my nurse Wanda and always get and answer. Everyone associated with the SCIU on the 1st and 6th floor is great, including OT, PT, and RT.

My wife and I spent the worst time of our life at the VAMC and we were treated like royalty. The VA should train everyone at the SCIU. I wish I could remember everyone's name, but here are just a few who do a great job.

Dr. Mary Thomas
RN - Wanda
RPH - Johnny

Ashley PT
All the clerks
All the PA's

They all do a great job!

AT